

REMARKS

By the foregoing Amendment, the Related Applications portion of the specification been amended to reflect the complete priority history of the present application. It is respectfully submitted that the amendment raises no new issues requiring further search and/or consideration. Favorable consideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 5-6, 8, 24-26 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) on the grounds of obviousness from Rhoden et al. in view of Egan. It is noted that the filing date of Egan is September 17, 1998. The present application claims priority from Serial No. 08/930,648, which is the U.S. national phase of PCT/JP97/00297, filed February 6, 1997, which claims priority from Japanese patent application P8-020332, filed February 6, 1996, and the Related Applications section of the application has been amended to correctly reflect this priority information. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Egan is not prior art to the present application, and that the rejection of Claims 5-6, 8, 24-26 and 28 on the grounds of obviousness from Rhoden et al. in view of Egan should be withdrawn.

Claims 7 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) on the grounds of obviousness from Rhoden et al. in view of Egan, and further in view of May. As noted above, it is respectfully submitted that Egan is not prior art to the present application, and that the rejection of Claims 7 and 27 on the grounds of obviousness from Rhoden et al. in view of Egan, and further in view of May should be withdrawn.

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In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application should now be in condition for allowance, and an early favorable action in this regard is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

FULWIDER PATTON LEE & UTECHT, LLP

By: David G. Parkhurst
David G. Parkhurst
Registration No. 29,422

DGP/rvw

Encl.: Return Postcard

Howard Hughes Center
6060 Center Drive, Tenth Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90045
Telephone: (310) 824-5555
Facsimile: (310) 824-9696
Customer No. 24201